

An Anthology  
of French and  
Francophone  
Singers from A to Z



# An Anthology of French and Francophone Singers from A to Z:

*“Singin’ in French”*

Edited by

Michaël Abecassis and Marcelline Block

With caricatures

by Jenny Batlay and Igor Bratusek

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## PREFACE

Few linguists have paid attention to French song and its linguistic uses. This mini-dictionary looks to fill this gap, for even if song is vastly quoted in popular culture and referenced in newspapers as well as scholarly manuals, it is perhaps not taken seriously enough by researchers and universities to warrant more in-depth research. However, throughout the world, songs in the French language are used in the acquisition of French in schools as well as at the university level: teachers or professors can incorporate songs into the curriculum in order to illustrate differences of register and linguistic variation as well as to raise lexical or grammatical questions. In scholarly works, on account of the quality of the lyrics, it is common for extracts of songs—spanning the spectrum from Jacques Brel to MC Solaar to Alain Souchon—to make an appearance, including, of course, legendary figures of French *chanson* such as Georges Brassens and Francis Cabrel. Song is often perceived, at first glance or listen, as a distraction and as something light-hearted—which is in fact not a complete assessment. Is it this light-hearted and spoken quality that causes song to be relegated to the margins of the canon, or that renders it inferior to a written text that is deemed more literary? More than the oral nature of song, its association with music poses the problem: song is a form of popular expression, but, rather like popular literature, which had long been looked down upon by scholars and the academy, this genre has now become a focus of serious academic scholarship and criticism.

French popular songs of the 1920s and 1930s retrace the traditional forms characteristic of popular language. The songs of Aristide Bruant, Félix Mayol, and Maurice Chevalier, which were circulated widely after the invention of radio, are rich in linguistic information and vocabulary that had previously been exploited only very infrequently. The example of La Bolduc is indicative of this phenomenon, as she is one of the iconic voices of Quebec from the 1930s. La Bolduc's speech, distinguished by a mixture of slang and vernacular that became a hallmark of the tradition of French singers, has rarely been studied from the point of view of pronunciation, syntax, or lexicon. More broadly, French song appears to be a vector of cultural, social, and stylistic values.

Many critical and scholarly analyses have been written about Francophone cinema, where song is omnipresent. This field also richly benefits from analyses based on a linguistic perspective. Musical sequences have made certain films genuine popular success stories. In the transition from silent film to talkies, the use of silence was often alternated with singing; examples include *Sous les toits de Paris* by René Clair (1930) or Julien Duvivier's *Pépé le Moko* (1937), which features performances by music hall stars Fréhel and Jean Gabin. In the films that mark the 1930s and 1940s, music was used by directors such as Jean Renoir, Marcel Carné, and Julien Duvivier as an integral component of their films, and more often than not, it carried a message or a moral. Song holds an equally important role in contemporary cinema, where it is integrated in the soundtrack. Song continues to hold the aesthetic and ideological value that it once did in musical films (examples such as *Les Demoiselles de Rochefort* by Jacques Demy and *On connaît la chanson* by Alain Resnais come to mind). French cinema is not alone in making great use of music. Francophone African cinema, for example, frequently dips

into a musical register inspired by popular culture (tales, words, chants) as a means of communicating the emotions felt by the characters to the audience/listener, such as in the films of Senegalese director Ousmane Sembène. This also brings to mind the role of music as one of the components of visual anthropology. Dances and chants accompany a fair number of documentaries by Jean Rouch (*L'Afrique* (1960), *La Chasse au lion à l'arc* (1967), *Le Dama d'Ambara* (1974), *Un lion nommé l'Américain* (2005)) and also form the subject matter of ethnographic and anthropological studies.

This book offers a collection of portraits, often very personal, of the greatest singers of the French language, who have constructed the musical landscape as much in France and in the larger francophone community as in the world as a whole. Every musical form, be it rock and roll, pop, rap, slam, or *nouvelle chanson à texte*, has had an impact on the linguistic practices of our society. By discovering and rediscovering these artists—both former icons and those of today—who contribute to the creation of the sonorous universe of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21st centuries, this volume aims to determine to what extent these musical genres influence the French language and nourish our collective imagination. Every portrait is accompanied by a caricature by Jenny Batlay or Igor Bratusek, who, with their own original artistic flair, have presented in sketch the way in which they perceive each singer.

By plunging into francophone song, one can achieve a better understanding of the culture and the language of its native speakers. It is within the intertextuality of these texts put into music that one comes across literature and poetry, formative for a generation or for generations. When a song withstands the test of time, it becomes an integral part of our

heritage and allows us to understand a little more of who we are. Song is a vital element accompanying every step of our lives.

Michaël Abecassis and Marcelline Block, Editors

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ABD AL MALIK (1975-):  
[RÉGIS FAYETTE-MIKANO]  
THE URBAN POET, PREACHER OF PEACE AND LOVE

SÉVERINE REBOURCET  
(THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON, USA)



“Abd Al Malik is a man of conversion”,<sup>1</sup> writes Mazarine Pinget in her preface to Abd Al Malik’s book *Le Dernier Français* (2011). Malik’s idiosyncratic conversion transcends religion. It embraces his mutations of identity and his maturation as an artist and writer. The hip hop artist, who comes from the poor suburbs of Strasbourg, has the capacity to shift between slam poetry and written texts, both with powerful social messages. Abd Al Malik, a son of Congolese immigrants, is an urban poet who unravels the power of reconstruction and rebirth through love, religion, and the inclusion of others.

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<sup>1</sup> Mazarine Pinget, “Préface” in Abd Al Malik, *Le Dernier Français* (Paris: Le Cherche Midi, 2011), 8.

Throughout his fatherless teenage years, the artist shed many identities in hopes of finding himself. These identities are central to his work. His alienation originates from the very Fanonian description of the conscience of blackness. In France, Abd Al Malik felt that he was black first and French second. In numerous lyrics he criticises the gaze of otherness, the gaze that makes a man of colour aware of his difference. His personal quest led him to multiple religious beliefs and practices, and he converted twice. After Catholicism, he embraced Islam, a “suburban Islam”<sup>2</sup> that he described as being based upon a binary conception of the world.<sup>3</sup> However, he ultimately found answers to his existential questions in Sufism, a branch of Islam. As an artist, Abd Al Malik began a solo career as a slam poet in 2004 after leaving the rap group—NAP (New African Poets)—that he had founded with friends and family members. This decision to pursue a solo musical adventure follows several life-changing events. It came after his marriage to female rapper Wallen (real name Naouale Azzouz) and was contemporaneous to his conversion to Islam. His solo albums *Le Face à face des coeurs* (2004), *Gibraltar* (2006), *Dante* (2008), and *Château rouge* (2010) became increasingly successful in France. *Gibraltar* was unanimously acclaimed by the French press and music critics, and Malik won myriad prominent prizes.<sup>4</sup>

Abd Al Malik may have benefited<sup>5</sup> from the social incidents—violent urban riots in poor suburbs—that occurred in France in the autumn of 2005. The gritty reality of youths living on the outskirts of Paris, Lyon, and Strasbourg was a catalyst. Thanks to his soft-spoken texts that defy the

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<sup>2</sup> Abd Al Malik, *Qu’Allah bénisse la France* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2004), 87.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>4</sup> Olivier Bourderionnet, “‘Picture-Perfect’ Banlieue Artist: Abd Al Malik or the Perils of a Conciliatory Rap Discourse.” *French Cultural Studies* 22:2 (2011): 152.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 151-61.



aggressiveness and impropriety of the usual rap lyrics, Malik came under media scrutiny as an example of a potent success story. His music raised the possibility of a non-violent dialogue between the French hip hop world and the mainstream media.<sup>6</sup> This interest was complemented by a pioneering collaboration between two distinct musical genres. In *Gibraltar* (2006) and his subsequent albums, Abd Al Malik worked with Gérard Jouannest, who was Jacques Brel's pianist and arranger and who is Juliette Gréco's husband. Malik's association with one of the major twentieth-century singer/troubadours of the *chanson française* elevated him and his slam poetry to the "Cercle of French Chansonniers."<sup>7</sup>

Malik's choices of musical arrangements have progressively evolved into hybrid genres. In *Le Face à face des coeurs*, his past experience as a rapper impacted his slam and music. *Gibraltar* marked a radical change, with Malik opting for simple arrangements: voice/piano and jazz sounds. As mentioned above, the tunes are reminiscent of the works of major French *chansonniers* (Jacques Brel and Claude Nougaro). In *Dante*, Malik introduced African beats and sounds. Finally, *Château rouge* is a *métissage* of musical genres (world music (African), soft punk, electro). In this latter album, numerous refrains are sung in one of the dialects from Congo-Brazzaville, the country of Abd Al Malik's parents. The slam artist also sings in English. In *Château rouge*, Abd Al Malik takes a more inter/transnational approach. This international group of sounds and languages echoes the social and racial diversity of the 18th arrondissement of Paris, where a metro station bears the same name as the album's title. The station is located not too far from the multicultural district of La Goutte d'Or. Clearly, Malik has a universalist agenda. Malik has

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 154.

repeatedly shown this remarkable capacity to enrich slam poetry with classical musical traditions in concerts and festivals.

In his overall work, Malik reflects on his own life and on the place of urban youth in French society. He offers thoughtful and caustic social commentaries upon the way France treats minorities. He reveals primarily fatalist trajectories of suburban youths and unfolds the rough reality and the tragedy of their lives. Premature and violent deaths of friends due to drug overdoses, suicides, and police blunders darken their existence. Malik also meditates on religion, race, otherness, and integration, engaging ardently with issues related to identity and multiculturalism in France. Despite the recurrent description of the *banlieue*, Malik praises love because the “religion of love”<sup>8</sup> has helped him forge his new self. The artist writes odes expressing his deep love for his wife Wallen and his children, his love for his faith and his mentor, his devotion to life and justice, and, most interestingly, his adoration for his country: France. Abd Al Malik is a proud Frenchman. His take on Frenchness, however, diverges from its traditional conception. It is entrenched in the very contemporary idea of multiculturalism, diversity and *métissage*. “Vive la France arc-en-ciel unie débarrassée de ses peurs”<sup>9</sup> (“Long Live France, a united rainbow, rid of all its fears”). Malik’s Frenchness is patriotic, but not conservative and narrow-minded. In a sense, Malik infuses his conception of French identity with the Sufist message of tolerance and love. Through his work and discourse, the artist aims to endorse multicultural France.

Malik’s visions can be seen as idealist and utopist, but should also be considered within the scope of his experience and his existence. He is

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<sup>8</sup> “Ode à l’Amour” in *Face à face des coeurs* (2004).

<sup>9</sup> “Le Soldat de plomb” in *Gibraltar* (2006).

fiercely opposed to racism, prejudice, and religious extremism. A form of racial and religious conciliatory idealism and cultural romanticism emanates from his work. Abd Al Malik conveys an honest message of love and hope. But despite this hopeful and assuaging discourse, the artist is fully aware of life's tragedies and struggles, especially for minorities.

RICHARD ANTHONY (1938-2015):  
[RICARDO ANTHONY BTESH]  
HE ROCKED AT THE AGE OF 77

VINA TIRVEN-GADUM  
(ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY, CANADA)



In 1959, the 21-year-old clean-cut singer Richard Anthony released his first pop record in France and became an overnight sensation. This was before the more flamboyant and handsome rock icon Johnny Hallyday—the French Elvis Presley—came on the scene. Despite Hallyday’s colossal presence and phenomenal success on the French music scene, Richard Anthony—with his boyish grin and courteous charm—went on to claim the title of the pop idol of the 1960s and 1970s. He became a pioneer of French rock music during the *yé-yé* period in France, a movement that had its origins in the successful radio programme *Salut les copains* (*Hello Friends*) which was first aired in December 1959. One of its sections was known as “le chouchou de la semaine” (“singer of the week”), which became the starting point for most *yé-yé* singers. Richard Anthony appeared on the show and went on to sell the highest number of pop

records in France, estimated to be in the region of 61 million. He recorded 600 songs in all, 21 of them reaching the number one spot. Many decades later, in his seventies, Richard Anthony suffered from numerous health issues—including a bout of colon cancer in 2010, from which he recovered, although he ultimately passed away at age 77 on April 19, 2015—but his lyrics and his ethereal velvety voice still enchant his fans and stir the hearts of most romantic souls even to this day.

Richard Anthony was born Ricardo Anthony Btsh, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January 1938 in Cairo, to a wealthy family of industrialists and diplomats. In his youth, he moved back and forth between Egypt, Buenos Aires, France, and the UK: in 1947 he attended the famous Brighton College, a leading boarding school for boys in England, and in 1951, the prestigious Lycée Janson-de-Sailly in Paris. After completing his *baccalauréat*, he studied law in Paris and was destined to become a lawyer, until fate decided otherwise. His father died suddenly in Milan in 1956, and as a result, Anthony abandoned his law studies and became a door-to-door refrigerator salesman in order to help support his family. However, at night, he played the saxophone in jazz clubs and honed his skills as a musician. He also met Michelle, who would become his first wife, and the mother of three of his children: Nathalie, Jérôme, and Johanne.

In 1958, just before the advent of the swinging sixties, a new pop sound from the other side of the Atlantic arrived in France. Ricardo took the stage name of Richard Anthony. He adapted this new sound to French lyrics and recorded *Tu m'étais destinée*, the French version of Paul Anka's "You Are My Destiny," and *Ma Peggy Sue*, the French version of Buddy Holly's "Peggy Sue" with Pathé Marconi Records (a France-based international record label). He had some modest success in France and eventually signed with Columbia records. His third single *Nouvelle vague*,

the French version of “Three Cool Cats” by the group The Coasters, was an immediate hit. Of course, *Nouvelle vague* could be a reference to the new school of cinema that was in vogue at that time and had been made famous by Godard’s *À bout de souffle*, which was released in 1959. Richard Anthony followed this song with a series of other *tubes*, among them the famous *Et j’entends siffler le train* (1962), which remained at the top of the charts for 22 weeks and which propelled him to the rank of leader of the *yé-yé* generation. This was followed with many other successful songs. At the same time, Richard Anthony was starting to get airplay in England with some English-language cuts. He recorded many songs in English at the Abbey Road Studios, made famous by The Beatles. One of his English-language songs, “I Don’t Know What To Do,” attracted the American record company Motown, who bid for the US rights to the song and won; they made Richard Anthony the first European artist to appear on a Motown 45 record single.

In the 1960s, Richard Anthony was a wealthy artist, owning homes all over France as well as overseas. In 1965, he recorded *Je me suis souvent demandé*, based on a Dutch song, and in 1967 he adapted Joaquin Rodrigo’s *Concierto de Aranjuez* as the French song *Aranjuez mon amour*. It became his greatest hit on the international scene. During the disco era of the 1970s, his fame declined; he also divorced his wife Michelle and moved to Saint-Paul-de-Vence, where he resided for four years. In 1974, his record *Amoureux fou de ma femme* reached the number one spot on the hit parade. In 1978, he moved to Los Angeles with his new family, and produced music for the US public; he recorded *Indian Summer*, an adaptation of Joe Dassin’s *Été indien*. He returned to France in 1982 only to be incarcerated for three days for tax evasion. His career slowed down at that time, although he still made rare appearances on French television.

At the end of the 1980s, after his second divorce, he stayed out of the public eye, but in 1993, he released a boxed set of 300 songs with EMI that went triple gold. In 1996, he rerecorded his new album *Sentimental* in French and Spanish, and in 1998, he published his autobiography *Il faut croire aux étoiles*; he also celebrated his 40-year career in show business at the Zénith theatre in Paris in front of a large enthusiastic audience. In 2010, he published the second edition of his autobiography *Quand on choisit la liberté*, which became an instant bestseller. In January 2011 Richard Anthony was made an Officier of the ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government. On February 12, 2012, he sang to a sellout crowd at the Olympia music hall in Paris, showing that Richard Anthony still rocked at the age of 70 plus.

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ANTOINE (1944-):  
[PIERRE MURACCIOLI]  
“THE FRENCH BOB DYLAN” IN A FLOWERED SHIRT

ALLISON MYERS  
(THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS)



Born June 4, 1944 in Tamatave, Madagascar to a Corsican father working in the France d’Outre Mer, Antoine spent the first 14 years of his life living in various parts of the world, from Cameroon to Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon. Born Pierre Antoine Muraccioli, he is best known for his *Élucubrations d’Antoine*, which helped shift the tides of mainstream French music away from *yé-yé* towards a style of rock and roll more closely tied to the folk and beatnik cultures of the United States. After nearly 10 years of recording and performing as a singer in both France and Italy, Antoine left show business to sail around the world, which he still does today.

Fame came very quickly for Antoine in the mid-1960s. After encouragement from French folk singer Hugues Aufray, he left his studies in engineering, picked up his acoustic guitar, and began to write songs.



Soon afterwards, Antoine signed with Vogue records and in 1965 produced his first single, the protest song *La Guerre*. In January of the following year, he released the well-known album *Les Élocubrations d'Antoine*, whose title track became an overnight success, propelling him to the public eye and kickstarting his career. Promoted by Vogue as “the French Bob Dylan”, Antoine’s long hair, flowered shirts, and irreverent attitude helped distinguish him from the clean-cut French pop stars of the 1960s, such as Johnny Hallyday or Jacques Dutronc. Musically, his use of the harmonica and his nasal, half-spoken vocals contributed to the comparison with Dylan, as did his lyrics, which occasionally addressed social themes of antimilitarism. On the whole, however, Antoine’s lyrics strayed from Dylan’s engaged, folk-derived storytelling and instead presented a self-ironic image of flippant youth, disillusioned with meaning and interested only in provocation. A notable example can be found in his *Élocubrations*, where he calls Johnny Hallyday *passé* and imagines him on display in a cage at the Maderno Circus. This famously stoked a long-running feud between the two when Hallyday responded with the popular song *Cheveux longs et idées courtes*.

During this period, Vogue promoted Antoine heavily. His back-up band was given a name, Les Problèmes, and just four months after the release of his first album, he released a second EP, *Antoine rencontre Les Problèmes*. More Rolling Stones than Dylan in sound, his lyrics still maintained the same self-involved and irreverent positioning, such as in *Je dis ce que je pense et je vis comme je veux*. From 1965 to 1967 Antoine experimented with differing styles of rock, from the soft folk sounds of *J’ai oublié la nuit* (1966) to the garage rock fuzz of *Dodécaphonie* (1966) and the bluesy *Je reprends la route demain* (1967).

By 1967, however, Antoine’s look and sound began to change radically. He split with Les Problèmes, cut his hair, and exchanged his

flowered shirts and bell-bottoms for button-down shirts and suits. With his 1967 EP *Madame Laure Messenger, Claude, Jérémie et l'existence de Dieu*, his lyrics became softer, with reflections on relationships and love, as in the song *Lolita, Lolita*. Moving away from the rock and folk sounds he began to develop with Les Problèmes, his music started shifting more and more towards upbeat pop, sometimes bordering on *chanson*.

Constantly changing his persona, Antoine also saw the beginning of his musical career in Italy in 1967. With the single *Pietre*, which hit number one on the Italian charts, Antoine began to focus on his Italian audience. Donning tuxedos and performing regularly on Italian television, his thin moustache and swaggering style resembled figures like Jacques Dutronc or Domenico Modugno more than the Dylan-esque rebel of the *Élucubrations*. From 1968 to 1974, he produced Italian-language variety hits such as *Canella, La Tramontana, Taxi*, and *Ra-ta-ta*, all of which were later translated into French. With his popularity beginning to wane at the end of this period, he expanded his repertoire to include miscellaneous projects such as a recording of the 1921 operette *Dédé* by Henri Christine and Albert Willemetz, and a reprise of the obscure 1969 dance song *Rush Gold* by The Original Gold Rushers Band.

In October 1974, at 30 years old, Antoine left his career in music to sail solo around the world on a steel galley ship named *Om*. This first adventure lasted for five years, during which time he published three books about sailing and life on the water. After a year-long reprieve in 1980, he set sail again and remains dedicated to his travels to this day. He has released various films and published photographic albums documenting his voyages across the world, as well as two autobiographies.

Despite miscellaneous recordings of traditional island songs and rereleases of his previous hits, Antoine's musical output during his initial

travels was minimal. It was not until 1987 that he released another major album, *Touchez pas à la mer*, this time under Barclay. Classifiable as easy-listening pop, the songs reflect the thoughts and sounds of his travels, largely focused on his experiences in Polynesia.

After Sony released a major three-disc compilation of his hits in 2007, Antoine began working on his comeback. In 2010 he achieved a level of cult fame in a series of commercials for the optical company ATOL, which has been parodied by various comedians. Then, in 2011 he began work on his first original album in 25 years, *Demain loin*. Released by Polydor in 2012 and spearheaded by the singer Stanislas, whose father had previously written songs for Antoine, it marked an important comeback in his career. The sound is much more polished than that of his previous albums and, having worked with a team of younger French artists, reveals his desire to get back in touch with contemporary music. Though the style is closer to soft rock than psychedelic, there are at times hints of his previous interest in the political power of music. The song *Les Arts du lit*, for example, is essentially a rallying cry for his most recent political cause: the decriminalisation and appreciation of the *métier* of prostitution.

ARTHUR H (1966-):  
[ARTHUR HIGELIN]  
THE TOM WAITS OF *LA CHANSON FRANÇAISE*

KIM HARRISON  
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Born March 27, 1966, in Paris, Arthur Higelin—Arthur H—is the son of singer Jacques Higelin (see portrait *infra*) and Nicole Courtois. Often compared to Serge Gainsbourg and Tom Waits, this singer-songwriter’s work has continuously experimented with the *chanson* form, mixing more traditional portraiture and storytelling with surrealism and theatricality, infused with notes of electronica, pop, blues, and jazz.

Jazz is the most obvious early influence in his music: from the jazz trio cover of his first album *Arthur H* (1990) and the 1991 EP *Cool Jazz Remix* (five versions of his song *Cool Jazz*) to jazz riffs on later songs, jazz can be heard to some extent on all of his albums. Musically sophisticated, later

albums also include tender collaborations (*Indiana Lullaby* with Lhasa), Dadaist rap (*Haka Dada* on the album *Pour Madame X*, 2000), piano solos (*Piano Solo*, 2002) and upbeat “dance-inspiring” melodies (*L’Homme du monde*, 2008). While musically diverse, in many ways Arthur H’s songs can easily be positioned within a traditional *chanson* canon, and follow in the footsteps of, say, Georges Brassens and Renaud, in terms of their storytelling. From *Le Général de Gaulle dans la cinquième dimension* and *Fantôme asthmatique* (*Bachibouzouk*, 1992) to *Bo Derek*, *Lady X*, and *Marilyn Kaddish* (*Négresse Blanche*, 2003), he offers his audiences humorous, often fantastical, portraits. And, like many *chanson* artists, Arthur H has publicly supported the French language and non-commercialised music, emphasising the poetic qualities of his songs.

A recent album and tour underline his affinity for poetry: he teamed with musician and producer Nicolas Repac to create an album of African and Caribbean poetry read aloud to a musical setting. More than being merely spoken word recordings, these works—including poems by Aimé Césaire and Édouard Glissant, among others—are performance pieces that place weight on both the poetry and the original music equally. Arthur H also regularly employs intertextual nods to his *chanson* predecessors in his work, and recently paid a more explicit tribute to Serge Gainsbourg. In May 2012, he performed his version of Gainsbourg’s concept album *L’Homme à la tête de chou* (originally recorded by Alain Bashung) at the Europavox festival in Clermont-Ferrand. Working with Denis Clavaizolle and a small team of musicians, this captivating adaptation uses more modern orchestration and mixing while Arthur’s gravelly voice and seated, understated delivery is clearly reminiscent of 1970s-era Gainsbourg.

Lyrics undoubtedly hold an important place within Arthur H’s oeuvre, but of equal importance is his embrace of theatricality, spectacle, and

performance, as the adaptation of *L'Homme à la tête de chou* testifies. This singer-songwriter is not shy when it comes to media interviews or engaging with his fan base. He regularly posts to his Facebook page, enthusiastically gives interviews, and has always toured heavily: he played over 700 concerts between 1989 and 1994. His fondness for performance has been evident from early on in his career. Playing with Brad Scott, Paul Jothy, and Jon Handelsman, Arthur H and the Bachibouzouk Band played six weeks at the Magic Mirrors in 1993, a circus big top with cabaret-style interior to perform an intimate, humourously entertaining live show, which they would later take on tour and which would become the subject of a short documentary film directed by Ken Higelin (Arthur's brother). The live album from the tour, *En chair et en os*, won him the prize for Best Male Newcomer at the Victoires de la musique awards in 1993.

His embrace of the theatrical has also led him to cinematic collaborations, with occasional acting roles, and invitations to filmmakers. In 2008, for example, he asked the American filmmaker Joseph Cahill to create a short film to accompany the album *L'Homme du monde*, bringing his characters to life. In the same year, he was invited to orchestrate the 2008 season of the *Duos éphémères* at the Louvre, a series of silent films screened on Friday nights, set to new music arranged by musicians of his choosing. The Ukulélé Club de Paris provided the music for *Le Jardin des délices*, while his friend and musical collaborator Nicolas Repac arranged the music for *Le Destin du voyageur*.

Arthur H's own voyages have taken him throughout France, North America, Africa, the Caribbean, and beyond, with global influences clearly being heard in his music and lyrics. While singing mostly in French, he does not shy away from using English in his songs (*Don't Make Me Laugh* from his first album is sung in English) or touring in anglophone (and